

Abstract

This thesis "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go" (Exod 4:21b) deals with the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in the first part of the book of Exodus (Exod 1–15). It seeks to answer the questions of what it means "harden heart", who, when, how and why hardened Pharaoh's heart, what are the implications for Pharaoh (especially whether the Pharaoh could freely change his decision and implement it) and what is God who hardens someone's heart (whether he is not only sovereign and powerful, but also a good, wise and righteous). This thesis includes my own translation, lexical, grammatical, diachronic and synchronic analysis, examination of the text in the context of the Old and New Testament and history of interpretation. Emphasis is placed on the most accurate translation (distinction of three different Hebrew verbs and their semantic nuances, distinction of different verb stems of stative verbs and distinction of description of the condition and change of the condition etc.). The main conclusion of this work is that God not limit Pharaoh's freedom to freely make decisions by "hardening" of his heart, but that he strengthened him that he would be able to freely decide whether to obey the Lord despite increasing pressure of "plagues", and in order to show whether his verbally expressed repentance is genuine.

Keywords

to harden someone's heart, free choice, Exodus